Mr. L. Fletcher Prouty
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2/22/89

Dear Fletch,

What a pleasant surprise to get from Lud Arons a copy of your letter to Navasky!

I'll keep in confidential unless I hear otherwise from you. It is fine!

You haven't seen much of me because it has not been safe for me to drive to Washington since 1977 and I've not driven out of Frederick since then. It also is not easy for me to do much searching in my files. So, I cannot easily get a tape of my interview of General Gavin in I think 1967. However, since writing Navasky I realized that the interview was in no sense confidential because it was for broadcast. He confirmed the JFK order to withdraw from VN. The program was Author's Roundtable if it is still in business. I don't know if Gavin is.

I remember this pretty clearly because I had to improvise a series of interviews, all that program aired on the ~~annual~~ American Booksellers Association annual convention, then at the Shoreham. Gavin had a book out and I had to interview him. Among quite a few others. Even Art Buchwald. all unread!!

I thought Gavin might be reluctant to speak forthrightly so I threw him a curve, enlarging the 1,000 to 1700, probably with 17,000 in mind. I knew, and I'll get to this because it may obviate your using what you may think you should not, of both the order to withdraw and retracting it, about three days after JFK was assassinated. The Pentagon issued press releases. The copies I had were from the Wash. Post. I'm sure the Times and other papers carried them. They also should be on file.

After Gavin corrected 1700 to 1000, the rest of what he said that I can now recall is that JFK called his generals in one by one and told them that VN was a political, not a military problem, and that political problems are not susceptible of military solutions.

When you consider that he was assassinated very soon after the first announcement, that we had re-evaluated our involvement and found that we could begin to withdraw our people. and that the new new policy under LBJ was announced in just two or three days, it gets a little hairy in the mind.

If Navasky agrees for you to do a piece, you may want to recall something more on the Dominican Republic. It elected, for the first time in a free election, well, more or less free, considering that his honchos controlled the military and the police, a non-Trujillo president, Juan Boach. The military threw him out. JFK stated US policy: to never recognize a military dictatorship that overthrew an elected government. Three weeks, about, after JFK was assassinated, LBJ began our costly and wrong intrusion when forces led by democrats in the army were about to throw the fascists, not a figure of speech, out of power.

By the way, you have a typo on page 3, there were 300 Cuban combatants by October 61. You mean 1960.

A quotable source on Dulles' threat to JFK, what will we do with 1500 armed Cubans in Guatemala, is Haynes Johnson's book, The Bay of Pigs.

I wrote Geyelin after the oped article to which you responded by letter. The Post forwarded it to an out-of-date or incorrect address, I sent it back to the Post asking that they forward it again and I've heard nothing since.

There is no end to the revisionism. Even those considering themselves liberals seem not to be able to abide the fact that we elected one who was turning out to be great so they join the reactionaries in clobbering him.

I'm glad Arons sent you a copy of what I wrote Navasky and very glad that you could address their prejudice so effectively. Best,

Harold